

Vaerting, Mathilde and Mathias. *The Dominant Sex: A Study in the Sociology of Sex Differentiation.* Translated by Eden and Cedar Paul. London: Allen and Unwin. Price 10s. 6d. net. Pp. 240.

DR. MATHIAS VAERTING has been known for some years past as the author of numerous investigations and discussions, marked by original thought and vigour, in the field of eugenics and other branches of the study of sex; specially notable was an inquiry into the optimum age of parentage in the production of mental ability. The present work, written in conjunction with Dr. Mathilde Vaerting, is of larger size and wider scope. The original title is *Die Weibliche Eigenart im Männerstaat und die Männliche Eigenart im Frauenstaat*. The admirable and experienced translators have happily reduced this awkward formula to *The Dominant Sex*.

The whole idea of the book is that throughout human history and prehistory there always has been a dominant sex, but that dominant sex has by no means always been the same sex. Moreover—and this is probably the most significant part of the theory—the authors hold that, whichever sex happens to be dominant, the characters of the State are the same. Dominance is prepotent over sexual character. Each sex when dominant is alike militaristic, selfish, harsh, overbearing, and in a man's state and a woman's state alike the traces of any opposing political constitution of society are as far as possible obliterated and forgotten, so that it becomes almost impossible to believe that it ever existed. The men's state and the women's state are alike one-sided and unjust in operation, and the hope of the world lies, the authors believe, in the possibility that some day a state may arise in which men and women are equal.

In working out this conception—which they have done very vigorously and acutely—one could have wished that the authors had made, not only a still wider induction of facts but, at the outset, a critical study of sources. They constantly accept the authority of Bachofen, and while Bachofen was a great pioneer and a very learned scholar, he is not to be followed without question. Our authors do not explain on what grounds they base his authority nor do they explain why Westermarck, whose learning and judicial caution are alike so notable, is to be set aside when he differs from Bachofen. They fail, likewise, to realise that, in establishing a proposition opposed to much current prejudice, even an excess of proof may be desirable, and they sometimes claim to have “proved” statements on a very slender basis of fact. They have a good case for a woman's state in some phases of ancient Egypt, and the example is weighty because of the ever increasing importance which Egypt takes in human history; but in illustrating their thesis that in a woman's state women are inferior in stature to men they rely mainly on scanty evidence concerning primitive Germany and avoid raising the question in regard to Egypt. One also notes that while they realise that mother-right (or matrilineal descent) is distinct from mother-rule (or matriarchy in the strict sense) they hardly discuss adequately the significance of this distinction.

Though it will scarcely seem to most readers that the thesis of this

book is here fully established—and the authors promise a further extension of the argument in a later volume—there can be little doubt that it will prove helpful in the attempt to grasp the evolution of human society. It is specially cogent in its criticism of what the authors call the ideology of a man's state such as that in which we ourselves live. Again and again they show how modern writers of high repute, by their inability to accept the statements of ancient writers who do not possess our own assumption of masculine dominance, are driven to absurd and capricious conclusions. The authors do good service also in emphasising the fallacy of comparisons—even in the physical field—between a dominant sex and a sub-ordinate sex. It is a suggestive and stimulating work that was well worth translating.

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DE LAPOUGE and Mjoen both make the important point that in race-crossings it is the single quality that dominates and not the one race that dominates over the other. Mjoen gets near to establishing this for human stocks as he has worked in Norway with Nord and Lap, stocks with presumably pure ascendants in each case. Crossings between widely divergent races, such as these, he thinks lower the physical and mental level and he has a good deal of evidence for this. Before accepting his conclusion without reserve however some social factors might be considered. Is the male Nord who either cohabits with or even legally marries a Lap woman likely to be a good specimen in reality? Is the fact of the non acceptance of mixed offspring in any full sense by either side not a factor promoting degeneracy especially perhaps if some dangers of degeneracy are reasons why mixed offspring has come to be in disfavour? E. A. Hooton gives valuable notes on some less known racial characters. He claims to be able to spot most negroid bones by their texture though similar texture does occur among other stocks such as Dravidians and Fijians. Are we here in presence of a character inherited by various southern stocks, who, on general grounds, are thought to retain a good many rather ancient features? He also finds that complexity of the coronal suture is a marked European feature, that a race with a high nasal bridge tends to communicate this in crossings with low nosed races which, in such mixtures often transmit their broad nasal apertures. But Hooton notes by way of contrast the low bridge and very narrow nasal aperture of the Eskimo; both these features seem to be of the nature of adaptations. Prognathism he finds is reduced in crosses with orthognathous stocks though a slight degree of it tends to persist; this conclusion of his might be supported from observations in Britain and elsewhere. Hooton regards the long narrow high Eskimo head as modified by extreme specialisation of the masticatory apparatus with its muscles tough and strong at an early age and the enlargement of palatal breadth so characteristic of hard-chewing peoples. This conclusion seems a very sound one. He adds suggestive thoughts on crossings between longheads and broadheads but our knowledge here is still very poor as we so rarely know enough about the ascendants of the parents who